NATIONAL COUNCIL, YWLL

INFORMATION BULLETIN

"THE LEAGUE FOR THE YOUTH, AND THE YOUTH FOR THE LEAGUE"

SEPTEMBER

League-Building: Our Urgent Task

What would you think of a League that has 700 more members than it does now? That has new branches on campuses, high schools and communities across the country? That has a consistent Young Worker circulation of 50,000 and 1000 new subscribers?

What would be the impact of your branch if it had 20 members instead of 10? 40 members instead of 20?

Well, you don't have to think about it; you can do it! During our National Membership/Circulation Drive (9/15-12/1), we urge every member, every branch, every section to join the campaign to build the size and influence of the YWLL.

And now is a good time to do it. Our involvement in the Hall-Davis campaign and other independent campaigns, as well as in the youth jobs movement, gives us the proper context. League building can't be done except through activity, through struggle with other youth for the rights of our generation.

Now is the time to ask that friend of yours to join. (You know, the one who's been coming to League activities and is wondering when you're going to pop the question). Now is the time to get together those friends of the League at that high school to set up a branch. Now is the time to take a bundle of Young Workers to your campus when it opens. Now is the time to be up front in the struggles of young people in your area.

"The youth and student movement cannot make its historic contribution without the YWLL. The mass building of the YWLL is required in order to realize the potential of the youth. In fact, the fundamental direction of the young generatic will not be clear until there is a bigger League, a League strong enough to influence the young generation as a whole.

"There is no other force within the youth and student movement that can make the analysis and project the actions to b undertaken as well as the YWLL. No other organization has our concept of unity anc seeks to build it precisely on such a bas

"Nobody else is building or going to build a militant, on-going youth movement for jobs that is grassroots based, youth with a consistent anti-monopoly orientati No other force has our revolutionary visi workingclass anchorage, organizing experi ence, creativity, tactical inventiveness mobilize, organize, educate and direct th anger and upsurge of the young workers, u employed youth, high school and college students, Black and other racially and na tionally oppressed youth. This is because no other organization in the youth moveme uses Marxism-Leninism in its approach to fighting for the needs of the youth." (From "The Elections and the Youth Moveme by James Steele).

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THE YWLL & TEENAGE YOUTH

Excerpts from "The Elections and the Youth Movement," the main report to the June 14 meeting of the National Council, delivered by James Steele.

Of particular importance is the outstanding contribution of the high school or teenage youth to the upsurge in the struggle of the young generation for its rights. One especially recalls the mass spontaneous actions involving tens of thousands of NYC high school students who were protesting the cutback in athletic programs last fall. High schoolers played a tremendous role in numerous struggles for peaceful desegregation, quality education, jobs, against registration and the draft, repression in the schools and police brutality. These youth are displaying great courage and organizational skill. They are showing an amazing determination to stick to principles, but also quickly understood the need to be flexible, to fashion alliances, and to mobilize adult support.

Self-critically, however, we must admit that the YWLL has not drawn the proper conclusions from the objective role of the high school youth in the youth movement. If we had shown more initiative and consistency, not only would the jobs movement be stronger but the YWLL itself would be a lot, a whole lot, stronger, bigger and more influential. Instead, many of our leaders and older members have tended to view teenagers as youth to be mobilized for demonstrations, taken on bus rides, brought to rallies or discos, but not to be organized in a fundamental way, not to be politically educated, ideologically and theoretically developed--taking into account the use of creative, popular, youthful forms and methods.

There is a tendency, at great harm to our organization's more rapid growth and development, to view teenagers in the abstract as a "basic section of the youth" devoid of class content. They are not seen as they are: in the main militant, overwhelmingly workingclass youth who are ready to take the road of mass direct action and on-going fightback. Instead, too many of us see them simply as "teenagers," meaning "kids."

Often this is justified in the name of industrial concentration and building among young factory workers. But we cannot understand industrial concentration in this narrow way. We want to build our ranks, influence and the youth movement among young factory workers. Absolutely. But we also want to build our ranks, influence and the youth movement among the teenage sons and daughters of industrial workers.

The young industrial workers are our class anchor. Their workingclass experience and lifestyle give the YWLL stability and firmness. They are a breaker against anti-workingclass concepts and influences. They influence the whole League membership with militant trade unionism, the fight for unity. That is why we must, absolutely must, have young workers in basic industry not only in our membership but also in our leadership.

However, in the youth field, especially under present economic conditions when the majority of young industrial workers are being thrown out of their jobs, we have to be especially flexible in applying the concept of industrial concentration. The demands and pressures on the YWLL are qualitatively different than, for example, those on the Communist Party....If the League is to maintain mass ties and roots among the mass base of the young generation, constant recruitment and constant replenishment of cadre from among the teenagers is decisive.

It is in this context that older--or so-called older--comrades should view it as their unique responsibility and special duty to give care and attention to this process. Most of our teenage members are inexperienced. The older members can help give guidance and assistance to our high school branches.

And let's put an end to this business about not being able to relate to teenagers. The real question is can the mass base of the League relate to those of us who have been in the League a while? Let's get about the business of bringing thousands of (teenage youth) into the youth movement and into the Young Workers Liberation League.

BRANCH LIFE

Realizing the serious need to build a branch in the predominantly Black area of South L.A. (Watts), the Southern California Section Committee decided in October 1979 to take some bolds steps in that direction. Five members from other branches were assigned to join with three already living in the area to form an organizing committee.

A list of people to visit was compiled: 1) possible recruits; 2) contacts who may know possible recruits; 3) friendly organizations and individuals.

At the second meeting it was agreed to work on a project to publicize and demand prosecution of the police who killed Cedric Steward, a Black youth. The organizing committee went door to door in the Steward's community, leafletting and meeting peopl people. The League attended and spoke at the Steward funeral and hosted a community meeting on how to struggle against police killings. Several press releases were distributed and one well-attended press conference was sponsored, all in the name of the League.

This work was followed immediately by a "Youth Speak-Out to the Candidates" at Jordan High School in Watts. While building the Speak-Out, the League participated in a march against police abuse and organized a 10th Anniversary Celebration, and distributed 10,000 leaflets. Many contacts were called upon to help in organizing the Speak-Out.

The organizing committee established an office in Watts and met there regularly. Every contact was invited to attend and many were directly asked to join the League.

As a result of this consistent and regular attention to building the League amon Black youth, as well as the League's visibility and presence at the grassroots level, the Southern California Section has established a branch of 18 members, most of whom are teenagers.

I'm writing this article to share my experience of working as a League member on my campus. I'm vice-president of my student government and president of a cultural club.

At the beginning of the year, the school administration was giving the student body quite a few problems: delaying distribution of BEOG and TAP checks, registration hang-ups, academic difficulties, the lack of a club period, etc. With some other students, we started raising these problems and demanding results. As a handful of students we were getting no attention from the administration. But when we started to get the student body involved, and a greater number of students was asking questions, the administration realized that it couldn't continue to ignore us.

Meetings were set up with school officials. At the beginning, they tried to discourage us by telling us nothing could be done about the problems because they were created by the structure of the school, and that can't be changed. But when they saw that we weren't backing off and continued to demand results, things started happening. We won some of our demadns and are in the process of solving others.

Working on the campus this year, I realized how weak an individual is in his struggle against the ruling class, and how powerful he or she is together with others With the economic crisis our country is going through now and the unlimited problems youth face, it's time to get organized. Every young person sees and feels the problems and pressures the ruling class is creating.

But in order to be able to organize our fellow students we must become their friends, so we win their trust and prove to them that there is no hidden agenda behind all this, that we are talking about their rights and interests.

In addition to winning a few of our demands this year on the campus, 7 students joined the League and many others are working with us.

O.M.
New York

From August 10-16 the United States Student Association had its Congress at the University of Oregon in Eugene. The YWLL had a literature table at the Congress which was accessible to summer school students as well as to congress participants.

Angela Davis spoke at a public candidates forum which was part of the congress. Her speech and the materials on the literature table were extremely well received by congress participants and by young people from the Eugene area. Twenty people from Eugene signed up to be on the YWLL mailing list and four youth joined the League.

This first new branch of the membership-circulation drive is a result of the League's involvement in mass activity among students, especially our work in the Hall-Davis campaign.

The new branch has joined the 1000 club for Young Worker circulation and has ordered 250 of the new YWLL anti-draft buttons.

Larry Moskowitz

Glossary

Class: "Classes are large groups of people which differ from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production, by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated in law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organization of labor, and, consequently, by the dimensions and mode of acquiring the share of social wealth of which they dispose. Classes are groups of people one of which can appropriate the labor of another owing to the different places they occupy in a definite system of social economy." V. I. Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 29, p. 388.

Book-Looking

TAKIN' IT TO THE HOOP: 1980 ELECTIONS--TIME FOR YOUTH TO ACT, by James Steele. An historical perspective on the contributions of the Young Workers Liberation League and of the role of the League in the struggles of youth today. 25¢

COFFINS FOR YOUTH--WHAT THE CARTER-PENTAGON DRAFT REALLY MEANS, by Jay Schaffner (reprinted from Political Affairs, July 1980). An analysis of how the attempt to revive the draft fits into the Cold War direction of U.S. foreign policy and ruling class policy in regard to youth. 25¢

SOLUTIONS, by Gus Hall. Comrade Hall's report to the Central Committee-National Council meeting of the Communist Party in June gives a clear overview and analysis of recent developments on an international and national scale and projects concrete solutions to the problems confronting working people and youth. $1.00

(These pamphlets are available from the YWLL National Office)

From Our 10-Year History

WE REPRINT BELOW THE "CALL TO FOUND A REVOLUTIONARY WORKING CLASS YOUTH ORGANIZATION," ISSUED BY THE TEMPORARY ORGANIZING COMMITTEE FOR A NEW MARXIST-LENINIST YOUTH ORGANIZATION. THIS CALL LED TO THE HISTORIC GATHERING OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN CHICAGO ON FEBRUARY 7-10, 1970 THAT FOUNDED THE YOUNG WORKERS LIBERATION LEAGUE.

U.S. capitalist society is a society challenged by its youth. Young people seeking a meaningful future are struggling against a sick society, a society which attempts to drag the whole world with it to the grave. Millions of young people are demanding an end to a society that threatens mankind with nuclear annihilation. They demand an end to imperialist wars, racism, poverty, exploitation, repression, and the moral and cultural values of the millionaires. Tens of thousands of youth are demanding revolutionary change.

Socialism, in power in one third of the world, is capturing the minds of youth in every oppressed and exploited corner of the globe. The United States, heartland of imperialism, is no exception. Young people are learning through their own struggles, and the struggles of other peoples, that the working class, Black and white, is the one force capable of wresting power from the billionaire rulers. Young workers are caught on the assembly line the daily exploitation of capitalism. In rebelling against brutal speed-up, dead-end jobs, killing working conditions, low pay, racism, and discrimination based on sex, young workers, Black and white, are beginning to feel their power--their class power. It is these young workers which will lead the youth movement into a powerful alliance with the whole working class and the nationally oppressed Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican and Indian peoples--an alliance for progress and socialism.

To help build this powerful alliance, a Marxist-Leninist youth organization is needed. Marxism-Leninism is the science of liberation, the science of working class victory. It tells you where it was, where it's at, and where it will be.

This will be a militant youth organization, fighting on every front against oppression. We will be fighting for higher wages, shorter hours, jobs for youth, free quality education for all. We will fight against racist hiring practices, the great tax robbery, welfare and education budget cuts, military spending and fascist police attacks on the people. In short, every struggle of the working class, Black and white, against the capitalists will be our struggle. Such a youth organization will imbue youth with internationalism. It will demand from all its members the highest standards in the fight against racism and chauvinism. All nationally oppressed youth will find a home and healthy atmosphere as leaders and members. A working class, Marxist-Leninist youth organization with young Black, Brown and white workers as its core and leadership, is necessary for uniting youth and winning them to Socialism.

To form such an organization, we call on all young people who agree with this call and are not opposed to the attached statement of principles, to join us in building towards a founding convention in Chicago on December 26, 27 and 28, 1969.

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Do you or your branch have ideas, experiences or suggestions you'd like to share? Send them to the Information Bulletin.

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Israeli Youth for Peace

On July 25, 1979 Gadi Algazi and Gai Pilavski (both 18 years old), along with 25 other young people with different political views, sent the following open letter to Prime Minister Menachem Begin, who is also Minister of Defense:

"We the undersigned, 27 high school seniors and juniors, respectfully inform you that we have signed the following statement: By reason of our opposition to the occupation and the oppression of the Palestinian people, we, the undersigned, when being called up for military service, shall refuse to serve in the occupied territories.

"We are convinced that by our refusal we contribute to the cause of peace between the Jewish people in Israel and the Palestinian Arab people.

"We think that the occupation means rule of our people over another and deprivati of its rights; the presence of the Israeli armed forces in the occupied territories means perpetual oppression and creates a chasm of hostility between Israelis and Palestinians--between Israeli and Palestinian youth--and threatens the chance of peace between the two peoples; our military service in the territories which were occupied in June 1967 means active participation in carrying out an intentional policy of oppressi lending a hand to a policy which leads to another war, to reconciliation with the occu pation.

"We shall not reconcile ourselves to the occupation, which turns us into oppresso and the Palestinians into an oppressed people. Military service beyond the "green line (the borders on June 4, 1967) contradicts our political belief and conscience...."

At a press conference in Jerusalem on January 2 of this year, Gadi Algazi declarc

"We believe that apart from the destructive political implications of the contin occupation for Israel and for the Palestinians and the cause of peace between them, we have the right to maintain our integrity as human beings. We want the Minister of Defense and the army authorities to respect our conscience as it respects the conscien of others for religious beliefs. We are not refusing to serve in the army; we are refusing to occupy the territory of another people....

"We are ready to pay the price of our conscience and political beliefs. We are ready to go to prison if that is the alternative the army gives us. We believe it is a waste. But we are not ready to betray our human conscience. If the alternative is to b jailers of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories or to be prisoners becau of our conscience and political beliefs--we prefer to be prisoners."

Gadi Algazi is a member of the Young Communist League of Israel, the leading forc among Israeli youth for peace, democracy and Jewish-Arab unity. He and Gai Pilavski have been imprisoned by the Israeli authorities for taking a stand for peace. U.S. youth can understand the struggle taking place in Israel now, for we face resumption c the draft in this country, whose aim is to make us cannon fodder for military adventu abroad.

We urge branches, sections and members to send messages of protest to the Israel Embassy in Washington, D.C. and messages of support to the "27 group" (P.O. Box 22582 Tel-Aviv, Israel).

GUIDELINES FOR ELECTION WORK

Excerpts from the April 16 report to the National Executive Committee on League work in the election campaign, delivered by Danny Spector.

We enter this electoral struggle as an independent organization, not as a sub-committee of the Hall-Davis campaign. Our aim is not only to collect signatures, but to collect signatures in a way that builds the League. Our aim is not only to distribute campaign literature, but to reach youth with the message of Hall-Davis, to address the needs of youth and offer them a fighting alternative, a winning method of struggle, and to do so as the League. Our aim is not only to reach yotuh with petitions and lieterature, but to plan and hold regular branch meetings and activities to which these youth can be brought, and to do so as the League.

The concept of involving membership is a vital one for our election work. Even more so in view of the fact that, as we said in December, not all League members will be involved in all aspects of the election campaign. If the leadership does not take the time to work out the ways of involving all members in one aspect or another, the organization will suffer. This is especially true in regard to teenage youth in the League. We have had some unfortunate experiences in which, under the pressure of the need for signatures, League leadership puts the question of involvement of membership on the back burner. Members, particularly high school youth, are often virtually ignored for the duration of the petition campaign.

Involving the membership requires, therefore, a creative and flexible approach by leadership. The question that should be asked is, "What are the different aspects of League involvement in electoral struggle and how can members contribute to ensuring their success?"

In previous meeting of the National Council and Executive Committee we have spoken of the concept of "balanced proportional development," that is, the integration of various aspects of League work--League building, the election campaign, the jobs movement--with the proper emphasis and attention to each.

This is necessary because the League is involved in many struggles and has many responsibilities. But it is not possible without planning. Planning allows for the realization of concrete objectives in a specific amount of time. It enables member to contribute to the work of the collectiv based upon a commonly understood direction Planning is a necessary aspect of maintaining an independent profile in the struggle in which we are involved.

We cannot stress enough the importance of maintaining a regular branch life during the election campaign, especially regular branch meetings. In many respects, everything else depends on the regular functioning of the League organization. Regular branch meetings are necessary for exchanges of experience, for planninggfuture activities and checking up on assignments. They are necessary so that we have something to which to bring youth whom we meet while petitioning. They are necessary to ensure the League's independent role in the election campaign and to prevent a situation from developing in which League m members begin to function as a subcommitte of the Hall-Davis campaign committee.

Follow up in this period is especially important, because we will be meeting hundreds of youth who will be interested i the League and in the campaign. Therefore, follow up must be conscious and timely. If we meet a young person at the beginning of the petition campaign, we should not wait two months till the campaign is over befor getting in touch with him or her. Sections and branches should discuss how to follow up on the youth who worked with us and joined us in the April Speak-Out activitie

An important part of follow up must be asking youth to join the League. We hav had some experiences in which youth are eager and enthusiastic about the League bu are not asked to join. Winning youth to ou ranks must become a conscious part of our day-to-day work in the election campaign.

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